



Network for Landscape
CONSERVATION

Advancing the Practice of Conservation at the Landscape Scale

CATALYST FUND Request for Proposals: 2024 Funding Round

Released: Friday, March 15, 2024

The Network for Landscape Conservation is pleased to share the 2024 Request for Proposals for the Catalyst Fund, which is made possible through the generous support of the Doris Duke Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The Catalyst Fund strives to accelerate the pace and practice of collaborative landscape conservation and stewardship across the United States by investing in Landscape Partnerships. The Fund couples financial support (through a competitive grant program) with capacity-building support (through in-depth Peer Learning) to catalyze Partnership efforts to achieve long-term conservation and stewardship goals. A portion of the Fund is reserved specifically to advance Tribal-led Partnerships.

Proposals are due on **Friday, April 26, 2024**, with grant awards to be announced by August.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Catalyst Fund is to accelerate the pace and practice of collaborative landscape conservation and stewardship across the United States. The Fund makes strategic investments in strengthening the collaborative capacity of place-based, community-grounded Landscape Partnerships. These investments are intended to better position Partnerships to achieve long-term conservation and stewardship success, building in landscapes across the country the enduring collaborative capacity needed to address systems-level challenges like the interwoven biodiversity, climate, and environmental injustice crises.

Grant requests should be focused on strengthening Partnership collaborative capacity—which can be understood as those elements that allow groups of partners to be able to function effectively across organizations/entities to achieve a shared purpose.

Funds can be used for supporting Partnership coordination staffing and/or for costs associated with other collaborative process activities such as: convenings; communications; partner and community engagement; governance development; and strategic planning and prioritization.

Funding should not be requested for direct project implementation, such as land acquisitions, land management activities, or trail building. Funding cannot be used for academic research; capital campaigns or capital improvements; or political lobbying.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](#) offers more background on collaborative capacity, as well as examples of elements of collaborative capacity that can be funded.

II. TRIBAL-LED PARTNERSHIPS

A portion of the Catalyst Fund is dedicated to supporting Indigenous leadership in landscape conservation and stewardship, and we welcome proposals from Partnerships that are Tribal-led. Such Partnerships may focus wholly on sovereign Tribal lands and/or on conserving and stewarding Indigenous interests, territories, and rights across a broader landscape.

Tribal-led Partnerships are those that emerge from and are supported by Tribal governments and/or Indigenous community(s) within a landscape. We anticipate such Partnerships will be convened by federally- or state-recognized Tribes (or designated departments/offices) and/or by organizations that are governed or operated by Indigenous communities/community members. Non-Tribal entities may submit proposals on behalf of Tribal-led Partnerships, but are required to include a letter of support from a Tribe and/or Tribal- or Indigenous-led organization affirming that the Partnership is being catalyzed by and emerging from the Tribal community(s).

III. FUND PARAMETERS

LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIPS: The Catalyst Fund seeks Landscape Partnerships¹ that reflect the following characteristics:

- **Place-based:** Focuses on a geographically explicit landscape.
- **Long-term Conservation Purpose:** Pursues a long-term and multi-issue conservation and stewardship vision and purpose, with clearly identified goals and outcomes that encompass people and nature.
- **Collaboratively Governed:** Embraces collaborative leadership and participatory engagement and decision-making.
- **Community-Grounded and Inclusive:** Engages a breadth of collaborators and partners on the landscape, bridging interests, perspectives, and cultures to find common ground.
- **Informed:** Uses ecological, cultural, traditional, and/or social information to guide its work and build a shared foundation of knowledge.

Implicit in these characteristics is an emphasis on a **transformative (rather than transactional) approach to collaboration**. Landscape Partnerships that embody transformative collaboration—by sharing power with those that have been historically excluded and building understanding and connection across difference—can be essential vehicles for sustaining the ecological integrity of our landscapes in ways that foster a more just and equitable future for our human communities.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](#) offers more background on the above Partnership characteristics, and on transformative collaboration.

¹ We use “Partnership” generally to represent a variety of differing structures and degrees of formality for entities coming together in enduring collaboration to advance landscape outcomes; we consider requests from partnerships, collaboratives, networks, etc. See [FAQs](#) for more information on what we mean by “Partnership.”

PIVOTAL POINTS IN PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: The Fund seeks Partnerships at pivotal points in their development where modest investments in collaborative capacity can shift the trajectory of conservation and stewardship outcomes over time in the landscape.

Specifically, the Catalyst Fund prioritizes the transition from collective *vision* to collective *action*. The shift from vision to implementation/action often requires increased time and energy, and investments in coordination and collaborative capacity at this point can be critical to significantly accelerating forward progress on landscape outcomes.

We recognize that Partnership development is unique to the context of a landscape and not always linear; proposals from established Partnerships that are structured around other pivotal points in partnership development may be considered, but interested applicants are encouraged to contact the [Program Associate](#) prior to applying to ensure appropriate fit. The Fund does not currently consider proposals for the launch of new Partnerships.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](#) offers more background on Partnership development.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Partnership Commitment:** Demonstrated commitment to building a community-grounded Landscape Partnership as an effective and enduring vehicle for accelerating conservation impact within a landscape.
- **Partnership Development Point:** The extent to which the Partnership is at a pivotal point where modest investments can accelerate strategic growth and action.
- **Conservation Value:** The ecological and cultural value of the landscape, and the potential impact of the Partnership's conservation work on that landscape, including but not limited to climate resilience and landscape connectivity.
- **Catalytic Impact:** The potential for the proposed activities to strengthen the Partnership and catalyze its ability to realize its longer-term goals and purpose.

The values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are guiding principles of the Catalyst Fund, and we believe that these values are central to the transformative potential of landscape conservation and stewardship. All proposals will be considered through this lens as well.

V. THE PEER LEARNING PROGRAM

The Catalyst Fund Peer Learning program convenes grant recipients from within a grant cycle into a learning/exchange community to further catalyze Partnership growth and development. Grant recipients will be invited to identify a leadership representative (e.g. Partnership coordinator, steering committee member) to join the Peer Learning cohort. Over two years, the cohort will convene (virtually) monthly for learning, exchange, inspiration, and growth, creating a space for Partnerships to continue to build capacity and better position themselves to achieve their landscape goals over the long term. Conditions permitting, the cohort will also convene annually for an in-person retreat.

VI. ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

General Applicant Eligibility: Applicants must be U.S.-based non-profit organizations with IRS 501(c)(3) status. Recognizing that many Landscape Partnerships may not have formal IRS status, an eligible organization may apply *on behalf of* a Partnership.

Tribal Eligibility: Tribal-led Partnership *throughout the United States* can apply under the above general eligibility. Additionally, for Tribal-led Partnerships in the American West,² eligibility broadens and Federally-recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations under IRS Code, Section 7871 are able to apply directly as well.

Timeline & Funds Available: Proposals are due Friday, April 26, and grant awards will be announced in August. Approximately \$335,000 is available for grantmaking in 2024, with 13-15 grant awards anticipated.

Requests: Applicants may request one- or two-year grants of up to \$25,000 in total. Previous Catalyst Fund grant recipients are not currently eligible to reapply.

Funding Match Requirement: A funding match of at least 1:1 is required. (*Match requirement is waived for the Tribal-led Partnerships*). In-kind support can contribute to this requirement, but at least 50% of the minimum requirement must be direct support. Direct match can be pending at time of application, but a grant award will be dependent on securing appropriate match.

Reporting: Funded Partnerships will be asked to submit short, written interim and final reports. The Network may also track progress of funded Partnerships for up to five years after the grant period through a short survey.

VII. HOW TO APPLY

Applicants may submit proposals via the Network's [online application system](#) through Friday, April 26, 2024. Tribal-led Partnerships are encouraged to submit proposals via the online application system but may, if preferred, submit this [Word form](#) via email to [Sara Mosser](#).

Informational Webinar: We will host an optional webinar for potential applicants on [Tuesday, March 26 at 2 pm Eastern Time](#). This will include a brief overview of the RFP, but will be dedicated primarily to responding to applicant questions. A recording will be posted to the Network's website upon conclusion.

In addition to the [Applicant Guidance Document](#), potential applicants may also refer to these [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Should questions remain after a review of all materials, emailed inquiries can be directed to [Sara Mosser](#).

² For the purposes of this RFP, the American West is defined to include: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Note: Tribal-led applicants from any geography not in the American West definition are still eligible to apply under 501(c)(3) status.